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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3075
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9605
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1469
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8907
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RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2511
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UNCLAS DHAKA 000145

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TAGS: [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ADVISER FOR MINISTRIES OF HEALTH AND RELIGIOUS
AFFAIRS BACKS U.S. PROGRAMS

REF: DHAKA 0134

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Adviser Dr. Rahman said he is well aware of
and applauds USG funded programs. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On January 24, the Ambassador, AID Country
Director, and Econoff (notetaker) met with Maj. Gen. Dr.
A.S.M. Matiur Rahman (Retd.), the adviser responsible for the
ministries of Health & Family Welfare, Water Resources, and
Religious Affairs. Dr. Rahman is formerly the chief HIV/AIDS
adviser, and has been the chairman of the national HIV/AIDS
committee's technical committee since 1985.

LEADERS OF INFLUENCE PROGRAM

[1](#)3. (SBU) Ambassador and Dr. Rahman discussed the Leaders of
Influence program, funded by AID and operated through the
Imam Training Academy of the Islamic Foundation. Dr. Rahman
is a lecturer at the Islamic Foundation, so is well aware of
the program and how it benefits communities by getting much
needed development messages out to them. He agreed that the
wide network of mosques in Bangladesh is a key tool in
transmitting information throughout the country.

CONTRACEPTIVE PROCUREMENT BY SOCIAL MARKETING CORPORATION

[1](#)4. (SBU) Ambassador raised the ongoing problem of government
approval for the Social Marketing Company to use the proceeds
from GOB-supplied contraceptives to restock supplies. The
current delay in procurement is approaching critical levels,
with a demand for almost 10 million units per month, and
almost no stocks of injectable /implantable contraceptives
and less than three months of oral contraceptives and condoms
on hand. She stressed that the consequence of a lack of
contraceptives would be countless unwanted pregnancies. Dr.
Rahman was aware of the situation, indicated he is looking
into the matter in depth, and hoped to see real acceleration
of this process, noting the cross-over between condoms and
HIV/AIDS prevention.

COMMENT

[1](#)5. (SBU) Dr. Rahman spoke positively of the U.S., expressed
appreciation that the U.S. is trying to help Bangladesh, and
noted that in the mid-1970's his laboratory had supported the
U.S. Embassy's health unit. His familiarity with the major
health issues in Bangladesh and with the GOB Bureaucracy make
him a good choice for this portfolio.
BUTENIS